

REPRESENTATIVE DAN KRISTIANSEN

2016 LEGISLATIVE REPORT 39TH DISTRICT

Dear Friends,

My greatest honor has been serving as your state representative for the 39th District since 2003. My second-highest honor was to be chosen in April 2013 by my fellow Republican legislators as House Republican Leader.

I am proud of the many successes we have achieved in the Legislature. We have provided record-level funding for K-12 education, including cost-of-living raises for teachers, and reforms to ensure accountability in our schools. We have reduced class sizes in grades K-3, where research shows it matters most. We lowered tuition at our state's colleges and universities – the only state in the nation to do so. We also saved public charter schools.

We provided reforms to our state's worker compensation program and other laws to help employers and increase jobs in our state. We have enhanced our state's mental health system, provided additional assistance to those with developmental disabilities, and expanded the ability for senior citizens to qualify for additional property tax relief.

Most important, we successfully fought against higher taxes so you can keep more of your hard-earned money and to ensure state government lives within its means.

Many of these successes have happened within the last two years with bipartisan support, as Republicans and Democrats hold nearly an even number of seats in the Legislature.

This year, the Legislature adjourned March 29 after a 60-day regular session and 20 days in a special session. This newsletter provides highlights from the 2015 and 2016 sessions.

Please contact my office anytime you have questions, comments or suggestions about state government.

In your service,

Rep. Dan Kristiansen
House Republican Leader



Rep. Dan Kristiansen
39th District

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A RECORD-SETTING EDUCATION BUDGET

It took a regular 105-day session and three special sessions, but the final 2015-17 state operating budget we adopted last June turned out to be one of the best education budgets in Washington's history. The \$38.2 billion budget increased funding for K-12 education by nearly \$3 billion – a 19 percent increase. As much as 48 percent of the budget is now directed for K-12 education – the largest amount in state history.

We provided salary increases for teachers, as well as cost-of-living increases. We provided funding for all-day kindergarten and reduced K-3 class sizes. We also made history by lowering tuition at Washington's colleges and universities – the first for any state.

This year, we continued our support for education, passing a supplemental operating budget that adds another \$15 million for K-12, including \$5 million to recruit and retain K-12 staff and support for beginning teachers. We also provided additional support for mental-health programs, long-term care services and assistance for the developmentally disabled. In addition, the agreement uses \$190 million from the state's rainy day fund to pay for wildfire suppression.



House Republican Leader Rep. Dan Kristiansen speaks at a news conference at the state Capitol.

We've got a lot of things we've got to do on education, not just on the funding end, but the reform end. We want to make sure the outcomes of these kids is first and foremost our priority, that our kids get a world-class education, said Kristiansen.

THE NEXT STEP IN THE MCCLEARY EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

In its *McCleary* ruling, the state Supreme Court said the Legislature was failing to meet its obligations to fully fund basic education. It was especially concerned local levies are being used to make up the difference of funding the state was not providing.

This year, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 6195, which establishes an education funding task force to make recommendations for next year, including the possible implementation of levy reform after interim research has been completed on local spending and local labor markets. The bill requires legislative action by the end of the 2017 session to eliminate our dependency on local school levies for basic education. I didn't support this legislation because it commits future legislatures to spending requirements and puts off key decisions until next year.



NO MAJOR TAX INCREASES

Last year, at a time when the state was enjoying a surge of incoming revenues, House Democrats proposed to increase taxes by \$1.5 billion. This year, they again proposed tax increases of \$119 million.

One of my Republican colleagues said it best: "In hard economic times, Democrats want to raise taxes. When the state has a surplus, Democrats want to raise taxes. When do they NOT want to raise taxes?"

Fortunately, both last year and this year, Republicans stood firm and said "no!" It took us into three special sessions last year and one this year, but in the end, we were successful in negotiating a bipartisan two-year operating budget and a supplemental operating budget, both of which increased education funding and avoided major tax increases.



CAPITAL BUDGET BRINGS MONEY HOME TO THE DISTRICT

You send a lot of your money to Olympia in the form of taxes. I am pleased to say we've worked to bring some of that money back home in the form of projects from the capital construction budget. Here's a quick look at those projects and the dollars provided:

- \$2.2 million for Marblemount Fish Hatchery upgrades;
- \$1 million for the Granite Falls Boys and Girls Club;
- \$372,000 for Sultan River access;
- \$199,000 for Waterspray Park;
- \$167,000 for Lyman City Park renovations;
- \$150,000 for Wallace Falls footbridge replacement;
- \$120,000 for Lake Tye Skate Park; and
- Funding is also provided for the Stilly Valley Youth Project, the Darrington skate park and Whitehorse Trail improvements.

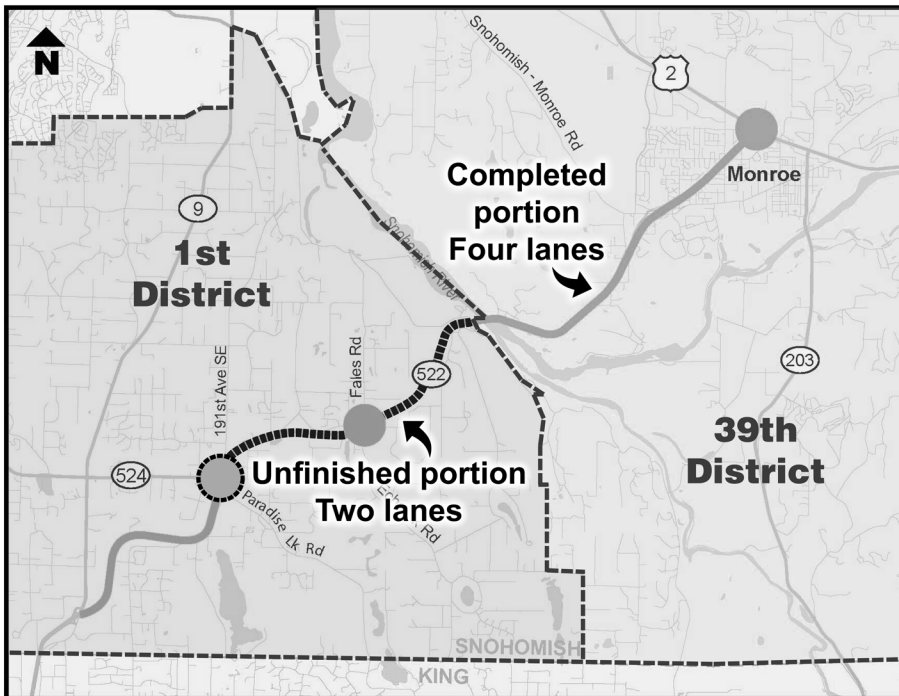


Rep. Dan Kristiansen has a discussion with House Republican Floor Leader Rep. JT Wilcox, R-Yelm, about legislation on the House floor.

TRANSPORTATION – ADDRESSING HIGHWAY 522

SR 522 Corridor Projects

Rep. Dan Kristiansen
39th Legislative District



Besides Highway 2, I get more emails, letters and phone calls complaining about the bottleneck on Highway 522 between Maltby and the Snohomish River Bridge. The congestion has become even worse with the complications of the state Department of Transportation adding express toll lanes on I-405.

When I took office in 2003, the majority of accidents on Highway 522 were between Monroe and the Snohomish River Bridge. I immediately began working to secure funding to expand that section into four lanes. That section is completed.

It was also in 2003 that the Legislature made an agreement with Snohomish County. The state would complete Highway 522 expansion from Paradise

Lake Road to Highway 9 and even do the Echo Lake Road interchange if Snohomish County completed the section from Paradise Lake Road to the Snohomish River Bridge. The Legislature then gave the county several options to raise funds. The county tried one of those options, seeking a \$17.8 billion roads and transit package in 2008, with \$127 million for the Highway 522 portion. Voters turned it down.

Since then, the state has completed its portion. Snohomish County has not.

This year, the Legislature approved \$1 million in the supplemental transportation budget for several highway corridors, giving priority of part of that funding to the unfinished portion of Highway 522.

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2016 Legislative Report



Rep. Dan Kristiansen – 39th District

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

To get more information about legislative issues, visit our Washington House Republican website at: houserepublicans.wa.gov.

If you want more information about bills specific to the topics covered in this newsletter or other legislation, go to the Legislature's website at: leg.wa.gov and click on "Bill Information."

As always, I welcome your questions, comments and suggestions about state government. Here's my contact information:

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